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Bridgeton Landfill Fire Creeping Closer to Radioactive Waste

May 24, 2013 7:37 AM

<http://stlouis.cbslocal.com/2013/05/24/smelly-bridgeton-landfill-fire-creeping-closer-to-radioactive-waste/>

BRIDGETON, Mo. (KMOX) – The stench is now the least of their worries in Bridgeton. Environmental officials held an emergency meeting at Pattonville High School Thursday night to lay out the latest news for the smoldering underground fire that now appears to be burning closer to nearby radioactive waste than previously thought.

Ed Smith, of the Missouri Coalition for the Environment, says temperatures are rising on the other side of the barrier that was supposed to keep the fire from the nuclear waste.

He notes the fire moved 200 feet in the last three months, and is now 1,000 ft. from the waste.

“What happens when the landfill fire reaches the radioactive materials? And from what we were hearing from them so far is that’s not possible,” Smith told residents at the meeting. “What we are seeing now is that seems more possible right now than it did a couple of weeks ago.”

But a spokesman for the landfill owner tells KMOX, “at currently measured **rates** of movement it would take more than 10 years to reach the edge of the north quarry.”



Residents, like Dawn Chapman, say landfill owner Republic Services is failing, and the EPA is being tight-lipped.

“I’m upset about it. I’m really upset because, you know what, we now have a critical situation going on.”

Meantime, a spokesman for Republic Services says: “Our assessment continues to be that our monitoring and control methods are effective and working as expected.”

Smoke Rises from Burning Bridgeton Landfill as Workers Dig

May 23, 2013 3:18 PM

<http://stlouis.cbslocal.com/2013/05/23/smoke-rises-from-burning-bridgeton-landfill-as-workers-dig/>





Smoke and steam rise from the dig site at the Bridgeton Sanitary Landfill, May 23, 2013 (KMOX/Killeen)

By Kevin Killeen

On a breezy, cool, overcast day — workers continued the delicate task of digging up parts of a landfill where an underground fire has been burning since 2010.

It's Day Three of the dig that's part of the court-approved action plan sought by Missouri Attorney General Chris Koster in cooperation with Republic Service Inc., owners of the Bridgeton Sanitary Landfill.

Depending on where you're standing, the air smells like burnt plastic, mixed with pungent, decomposing garbage.

From across the street as viewed through binoculars, men in hard hats could be seen standing nonchalantly on the hillside of the landfill, watching an earth mover lift out smoldering scoops of dirt mixed with trash. Thick steam rose out of the hole, obscuring the legs of the workers who did not appear to be wearing breathing masks or any protective gear.

The plan **calls** for removing six pipes believed to be feeding oxygen to the fire, and then capping the entire fire site with plastic tarp to smother the fire and lock in the odor.

No flames were showing Thursday afternoon, just smoke.

Bridgeton mother-of-three young children Dawn Chapman told KMOX by phone that since the digging began neighbors have complained of irritation to the eyes, nose and throat. Chapman has been pressing the Missouri Department of **Natural Resources** to immediately begin testing the site for “alpha and beta” radiation — because of its proximity to the West Lake Landfill containing nuclear waste from the Manhattan Project.

Earlier this month, Koster told reporters the fire remains about a thousand feet from the nuclear site. But Chapman and the Missouri Coalition for **the Environment** have

raised concerns that wells closer to the fire that monitor ground water have in the past detected traces of radiation that could become airborne in the rising steam and smoke.

The Missouri DNR told KMOX Wednesday it is testing the site for “gamma” radiation, but not for alpha and beta. DNR referred questions on that policy decision to the Missouri Department of Health, where a spokesperson says testing for alpha and beta radiation requires lab time turnaround that could take weeks.

The digging and capping of the site is scheduled to be complete by June 14.

As part of the court-approved plan, residents living within a mile of the site have been offered hotel rooms until the project is complete. Knocking on doors Thursday, KMOX news found residents still at home saying they’re taking a “wait and see” attitude before they leave their homes.